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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

REPORT

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Railroad Directorate

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1. On 30 April 1951, a meeting of officials of the Halle Railroad Directorate (RBD Halle) took place in Halle. During the meeting, various officials spoke of the poor condition of the track in the Directorate area and mentioned the following points.
2. The track surface (rails etc) is so bad that, in places, it has been declared dangerous by the responsible construction department (Baudenzerat). As a result, the speed of trains on the main lines has been reduced by about 50%. This reduction of speed has not been made public. On the contrary, according to the new timetable dated 20 May 1951, speeds, especially for express trains, have been raised to 90 km. per hour. A special timetable issued for the use of the railroad shows only a speed of 60 km. per hour for these trains, however. This means that, as far as the public is concerned, the greater part of the express trains are considerably overdue. In order to decrease the discrepancy between the actual schedule and the published schedule, the authorities have scheduled long layovers at various stations on the public timetable.
3. On the Leipzig-Altenburg line, there are four sections where the track is very bad, and trains are permitted to travel only at 30 km. per hour. It has been impossible to repair the track because of the lack of necessary materials.
4. There are severe bottlenecks, especially in rails and sleepers. To overcome the shortage of sleepers, experiments were tried with concrete sleepers. Iron and wooden sleepers were replaced by concrete sleepers on secondary lines. Such measures offer only a temporary solution, because it is estimated that in four months the supply of all available iron and wooden sleepers will be exhausted.
5. Concrete sleepers compare unfavorably with iron or wooden sleepers, because they have no elasticity. The use of such sleepers would result in increased rail accidents and other damage.

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